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SUBJECT: UNGA 65: FRANCE'S PRIORITIES

REF: A. STATE 90254
[1](#)B. PARIS POINT 27 AUGUST 2009

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: President Sarkozy's August 26 speech to French ambassadors provides clear insight into France's priorities for UNGA and the Pittsburgh G20 summit. These include, greater "global governance," including economic regulation and broader efforts to address climate change; UN reform; bold steps in pursuit of Middle East peace; a serious approach towards nuclear nonproliferation; and continued actions to fight terrorism. On September 2, Marc Giacomini, MFA's DAS-equivalent for UN and International Organizations provided PolCouns additional information on specific resolutions France will likely present or support during UNGA. These include addressing child soldiers (with the hope of resolving past U.S. opposition), "the Elimination of All Forms of Religious Discrimination," and perhaps a resolution on "violence against women" in a manner that Giacomini hopes will complement a possible U.S. proposal on violence against girls. France expects to support resolutions on Burma and North Korea, and Giacomini expects "intense discussions" on non-proliferation issues between France and its partners in the run-up to UNGA. END SUMMARY.

SARKOZY'S PRIORITIES TO FRENCH AMBASSADORS PREVIEWS UNGA

[1](#)2. (SBU) In remarks to the annual French Ambassador's Conference on August 26 (ref B), President Sarkozy emphasized a number of themes that will likely form the framework of his interventions at UNGA 65:

-- Global Governance: in his remarks on the upcoming Summit in Pittsburgh, Sarkozy was clear that France will push for "new global regulations" to increase the state's role in economic coordination and response and to address climate change. Related to the economy, Sarkozy's vision includes more efforts at ending "bank secrecy" vis-a-vis tax authorities, uniform rules on financial markets traders' and executives' bonuses, and greater regulation of hedge funds. On addressing climate change, Sarkozy proposed new pricing mechanisms for the global oil trade, "equitable sharing" of civil nuclear energy, and instituting carbon taxes and trading ("de-carbonized growth");

-- UN Reform: France, working with the U.K., is likely to support an interim Security Council reform as a first step towards greater reform. In addition, Sarkozy stated that "all the major UN bodies and specialized institutions must change, with an obsessive focus on effectiveness;"

-- Broader reach for some international organizations: Sarkozy advocated for the creation of "a real World

Environmental Organization" to coordinate the "proliferation" of international organizations addressing environmental issues. France proposes that this World Environmental Organization, as well as the International Labor Organization, be directly involved with the WTO, the IMF, and the World Bank whenever key aspects of labor or climate agreements are challenged. The goal is to place labor law, environmental law, and trade law on an equal footing.

-- Middle East Peace: Providing certain conditions are met, Sarkozy proposes holding a summit this fall under the auspices of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) to support the peace process and press all parties involved to assume their responsibilities;

-- Nuclear Nonproliferation: Sarkozy underlined the need for a strong multilateral approach regarding North Korea and Iran. He chided Iran for not responding to the negotiation offers put forward by the "six parties" (France, U.S., Germany, Russia, China, and the U.S.). He added, "let's be clear: if Iran doesn't change its policy, we are headed straight for a crisis;"

-- Fighting Terrorism: Sarkozy noted the on-going threat of international terrorism and the specific need to help Afghanistan consolidate the benefits of its recent elections and to support Pakistan in its more active engagement against terrorists. France will also increase its assistance to African countries faced with a growing threat from al-Qaeda. Sarkozy added, "France will not allow al-Qaeda to establish a sanctuary on our doorstep, in Africa." (Note: France is organizing a high-level conference on security/terrorism in Sahel counties on September 10, with bilateral meetings with the U.S. in the morning and adding EU partners for the afternoon sessions. End note.)

THE MFA ON FRANCE'S PRIORITIES FOR UNGA 65

13. (SBU) PolCouns, accompanied by Poloff, discussed U.S. UNGA 65 priorities (per Ref A) on September 2 with Marc Giacomini, MFA's DAS-equivalent for the UN and International Organizations, who was joined by Cecile Vigneau, Deputy Director for Human Rights. Giacomini expressed his appreciation for the information and said "there is much here that we can work on together." He added it was not yet clear if Foreign Ministers were expected to go to Pittsburgh or remain in New York with Secretary Clinton. Giacomini also noted that the UNGA would face some time constraints, given the late start due to the Eid holiday plus the major Global Fund event and the Pittsburgh G20 gathering.

14. (SBU) While not offering a comprehensive assessment of French objectives, Giacomini briefly presented France's broad list of UNGA 65 priorities:

-- In the 3rd Committee, France plans to raise again "children's rights," including restrictions on child soldiers. Giacomini acknowledged past U.S. difficulties with this approach, due to issues related to military schools and also a firm minimum military age of eighteen. He hoped we could come to an agreement on having the minimum age be applicable only for combat deployments;

-- France wants to debate a resolution on "The Elimination of All Forms of Religious Discrimination," as a counter-measure to efforts to codify "the right of religion," which France views as potentially discriminatory and could restrict free speech and cultural diversity. Giacomini admitted that this proposal will face difficulties in UNGA, especially from the OIC;

-- France expects to support resolutions on Burma and North Korea and will likely offer a resolution in concert with the Netherlands condemning violence against women. Giacomini noted that France welcomes the opportunity to consult closely with the U.S. on this since he understands the U.S. is considering a resolution on violence against girls as one follow-on item from the Secretary's July trip to Eastern

Congo;

-- There may also be an effort by France and other European countries to pursue a resolution on "enforced disappearances;"

-- Giacomini expects "intense discussions" on non-proliferation issues in the run-up to the UNGA. In other meetings, France has expressed concerns about the relative role of disarmament in our non-proliferation efforts and the need to continue to focus on Iran and North Korea.

THE BROAD THEMES

15. (SBU) Giacomini confirmed that France will talk about the need for improved "global governance" on both economic and environmental issues. A priority under this theme will be better coordination at helping emerging economies meet new standards. Developed countries will need to improve their approaches to financing development in a way that promotes sustainability. In France's view, engaging Brazil on these issues will be key.

16. (SBU) Addressing climate change will be another French priority. Giacomini stated it was understood, and welcomed, that the U.S. is developing a new position on climate change, but that "we" need to "set an example" for developing countries, in particular by stabilizing the level of atmospheric carbon dioxide.

17. (SBU) Regarding the global economic recession, Giacomini confirmed that France would be prepared to "fully engage" in Pittsburgh. According to Giacomini, France's position is that there cannot be a return to "business as usual," as that will inevitably lead to another crisis. There will need to be new models for global regulation -- understanding that we have different visions of the path to recovery, and different constraints. It is clear, however, that central banks cannot "fund the global economy," Giacomini stated.

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